

PRHSMUN VI



**Troubles on the Emerald Isle
The Republic of Ireland
Background Guide**

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PRHSMUN VI Saturday, March 1, 2025

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Letters from the Chairs:

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to PRHSMUN VI! My name is Thomas Driscoll and I will be your chair for this Crisis Committee. I am currently a senior at Pearl River High School and I have been a part of Model UN since my freshman year. I am proud to say that I am the Secretary General of our school's MUN club. Furthermore, I have experience with some of Model UNs largest conferences such as YMUN at Yale University. Alongside Model UN I serve as secretary for my school's Student Council and run track and field.

Model UN means so much to me. This club and my position in it is very important to me, as it allows me to engage in my diplomatic prowess and interact with others in meaningful discourse. Ultimately, that's the environment that I wish to create with this crisis. I have done much to educate myself on this topic, and it is something that means a lot to me, and so I am so incredibly excited to see the creative, innovative, and of course, diplomatic, solutions you all come up with on March 1st, thank you all for joining me in such an exciting crisis!

Hello everyone! My name is Maeve McGee, and I will be one of the JCC Crisis co-chairs this year. I am a sophomore at Pearl River High School, and I have been a part of Model UN here since eighth grade. I will also be participating at BOSMUN through Boston University's conference this year. Outside of school, I love to read, paint, and play the flute. This is my first time co-chairing, and I am very excited for this year's PRHSMUN conference!

If you have any questions, you can reach us at modelun@pearlriver.org.

Thomas Driscoll

Chair, Troubles on the Emerald Isle

Maeve McGee

Co-Chair, Troubles on the Emerald Isle



Committee Background:

The United Nations (U.N.) is made up of 5 major active bodies. These bodies are the General Assembly (GA), the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the International Court of Justice (ICJ), and the U.S. Secretariat. The United Nations Security Council is one of the five main bodies of the United Nations, tasked with maintaining international peace and security. The United Nations Security Council has the authority to take actions to address threats to peace, ranging from sanctions to military intervention. In this crisis session, **The United Nations Security Council** will focus on **The Northern Ireland Crisis**, a conflict that has roots in the historical divide between Catholic Nationalists, who seek unification of the Republic of Ireland, and Protestant Unionists, who wish to remain part of the United Kingdom. Despite the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, recent developments, such as Brexit, have exacerbated tensions, leading to a renewed risk of violence and instability. The Security Council will discuss how to mediate this tension and ensure peace in Northern Ireland.

Introduction:

Northern Ireland has faced deep divisions for centuries, mainly between Catholics wanting to reunite with Ireland and Protestants wanting to remain part of the UK. This conflict, known as “The Troubles,” led to years of violence. The Good Friday Agreement in 1998 brought peace, but recent issues like Brexit have revived tensions. In this session, the UN Security Council will discuss how to help resolve the crisis in Northern Ireland. They get to explore solutions to peace and address the challenges faced by both communities, aiming to ensure a stable and peaceful future for the region.



Background & History:

The root of this crisis' conflict can be linked back to the Protestant Reformation. Before the reformation Ireland was going through a golden age of culture and literature, translating much of the Latin scripture and literature that is known today.

The island was made up of several separate kingdoms who were all at peace with one another and shared similar cultural and religious values. However, the lack of a unified government made Ireland an easy target for the kingdom on their neighboring island, England. By the 16th century, most of Ireland had been conquered by England. To make matters for Ireland worse, Henry VIII, the king of England, had recently begun what would eventually become known as the English Reformation, converting England and much of Europe from Catholics into



Protestants. Initially, the reformation had little effect on Ireland as the island remained Catholic but this changed in 1609 when the British government encouraged English and Scottish Protestant settlers to start plantations in the Northern Irish kingdom of Ulster. Although these Protestants were initially a minority in Ireland, they eventually gained economic dominance.

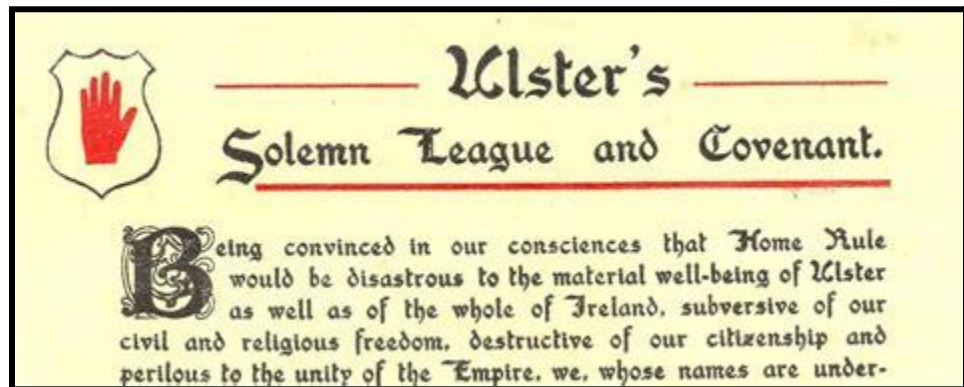
Over the next three centuries Ireland would face immense oppression from the island's British overlords. Irish Catholics were not given equal rights and Ireland had nearly no political freedoms whatsoever. One event in particular, the Irish Potato Famine, wiped out nearly one in seven Irish people and caused one in four



Irish people to immigrate. The British government provided little to no aid to the starving Irish and was complacent as around one million Irish starved to death.

By the start of the twentieth century the fire of Irish independence sentiment began to kindle. Multiple centuries of oppression under British rule caused a high amount of animosity towards the British amongst Irish Catholics. Several key Irish politicians such as Daniel O'Connell pushed for an Irish home rule bill in the British parliament.

However, a new paramilitary group of predominantly protestant Northern-Irish unionists formed known as the Ulster



Volunteers. The Ulster Volunteers formed with the singular mission of ensuring an Irish home rule bill would not be passed. In response to the formation of the Ulster Volunteers, a group of Irish nationalists formed the Irish Volunteers.

Although an Irish home rule bill did technically pass in 1914, it excluded six of the northern counties of Ulster and was suspended before it could go into effect due to the outbreak of the First World War. This prompted the Irish Volunteers to split into two separate groups, the National Volunteers who supported the British war effort, and the Irish Volunteers who did not support the British war effort. In 1916 the Irish Volunteers, along with another paramilitary group, the Irish Citizen Army, launched an armed insurrection against British rule which is known today as the Easter Rising. British forces were able to quickly put down the insurrection. Although initially the insurrection did not have much public support in Ireland, the Irish public began to sympathize with the rebels after British officials sloppily executed fifteen rebel leaders and imprisoned more than thousand suspected rebels without trial.



In 1919, after winning several key elections, a pro-independence Republican Irish party known as Sinn Féin declared the creation of an Irish Republic with its own parliament. The Irish Volunteers, who became known as the Irish Republican Army (or IRA for short,) would solidify Ireland's independence by waging a guerilla war against the British that ended in 1921. However, during peace talks, Northern Ireland opted to remain a part of the United Kingdom. The newly independent Republic of Ireland would enter a period of peace and steady economic growth.

While Catholics under the Republic of Ireland were finally able to find freedom from persecution, Catholics still living in Northern Ireland continued to face discrimination. During the 1960s, thousands of Northern Irish Catholics, inspired by civil rights movements in the United States, engaged in peaceful protests with the aim of ending religious discrimination in Ireland. However, these protesters were often met with counter-protesters which often

resulted in violence commencing between the two groups. Due to increasing intercommunal violence in Northern Ireland, British troops were deployed in Ireland with the goal of stabilizing the region. However, these troops only raised further discontent as they unfairly targeted Catholics. Due to disagreements within the IRA over the organization's role as either a political or



military force, a group called the Provisional IRA broke away from the IRA and began its own military campaign in Northern Ireland. In Northern Ireland, the paramilitary group of the Ulster Volunteer Force was once again created with the goal of preventing Irish reunification, along with several other loyalist groups such as the Red Hand Commando and the Ulster Defense Association.



This period of violence in Northern Ireland is known as “the Troubles.” This period would last for three decades where due to violent attacks from all parties, 3,600 deaths would occur. In 1998, after a ceasefire was agreed upon by the Provisional IRA, talks between the Irish and British governments began and the Good Friday Agreement was signed. The agreement did not reunify Ireland but it allowed for Northern Ireland to unify with Ireland if a significant shift in public opinion were to occur and a national referendum was held. The agreement reinforced Northern Ireland's consensual union within the United Kingdom.



Current Situation:

While “the Troubles” may have ended, controversy over Northern Ireland's status remains. IRA splinter groups continue to launch terrorist attacks in Northern Ireland in pursuit of Irish reunification. These IRA groups reject the Good Friday Agreement and resort to using terrorism and fear tactics in an attempt to force Irish reunification. Several of the loyalist paramilitary groups remain in existence as well.

Demographic shifts in Northern Ireland have also kept the reunification discussion alive as Catholics are no longer a minority in Northern Ireland. In a recent census, 42% percent of Northern Irelanders identified as Catholic while only about 31% identified as Protestants. Discontent in Northern Ireland over the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union has also stirred reunification talks. After the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union, hard border policies instituted by the United Kingdom have made trade within the emerald isle complicated. The complications to trade and new border system has given a new perspective on Irish reunification as it could be a way for Northern Ireland to rejoin the European Union.

While future Irish reunification still remains a future possibility, it is far from a guarantee. Loyalist sentiment is still widespread in Northern Ireland despite a shift in demographics. A potential reunification would also require heavy economic investments in Northern Ireland from both the Republic of Ireland and the European Union. All Northern Irish residents would have to be efficiently integrated into Irish welfare systems, particularly the Irish healthcare system. Irish leaders themselves would have to consider whether integrating Northern Ireland would be economically plausible.



Focus Questions:

- What were the root causes of the conflict in Northern Ireland, and how did religion, politics, and colonialism intersect to shape this crisis?
- How did the Good Friday Agreement impact the conflict, and to what extent has it succeeded in achieving peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland?
- How did Brexit impact Northern Ireland, particularly in terms of the Irish border and the region's relationship with both the UK and the Republic of Ireland?
- What role do paramilitary groups, such as the IRA and loyalist groups, still play in Northern Ireland today, and how can their influence be reduced?
- How can international parties (Ex: European Union, the United Nations, the United States,...) support the peace process in Northern Ireland?

Consider these questions when creating your paper:

- What is your country's position on the topic?
- Who are your allies? Enemies?
- What could our country stand to gain from this conflict?



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